

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

PLANT MATERIALS CENTER
LOS LUNAS, NM

Planting Guide for Production of 'Bighorn' Skunkbush sumac (Rhus trilobata).

SEED PRODUCTION

1. When grown under ideal conditions, plants will begin producing seed after four to five years. Fruit of 'Bighorn' ripen in July at Los Lunas, N. M. It is persistent, and may remain on the plants until late fall.
2. The seed can be cleaned several different ways. At the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center (PMC) the fruit coats on the major portion of the pulp is removed by macerating in water with a Dybvig. After drying, the seed are scarified for 60 seconds in a tumbler to remove the remaining pulp. The seed is then separated from the trash with a seed cleaner.
3. Skunkbush sumac seed have hard impervious seed coats. Seed are soaked in concentrated sulfuric acid for ten to twenty-five minutes to increase seed coat permeability at the Los Lunas PMC. 'Bighorn' does not exhibit embryo dormancy. Stratification is not necessary.

PRODUCTION OF SEEDLINGS

1. For best growth, plants should be grown in a well-drained sandy loam. The seedbed can be prepared by plowing, disking and firming the surface with a roller or cultipacker.

Fumigation of seedbeds prior to planting is helpful to reduce weed competition and insect or disease problems. **CAUTION:** Be sure to handle and apply fumigants or any other chemicals according to labeled instructions.

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2. 'Bighorn' should be planted after danger of frost has passed. Emergence should begin after approximately two weeks.
 3. At the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center (PMC) the seed are sown in rows in beds. There are four rows, spaced 20 cm apart, in each bed. The beds are spaced for ease of access and cultivation. Seeding rates will vary according to ultimate use. At the Los Lunas PMC, approximately 600 seed or 6 grams of acid scarified seed per meter, should yield 75 useable plants. Seeding rates this heavy will yield a high percentage of uniform liner stock (30-80 cm tall) after two years. Lower seeding rates would yield larger, less uniform, plants. The seed should be planted 1-1.5 cm deep.
 4. The beds should be mulched to prevent excessive drying. An excelsior mulch with net backing is used at the Los Lunas PMC. This enables the mulch to be tacked down to prevent it from blowing. The beds should be sprinkle irrigated to provide uniform coverage. They should be sprinkled only enough to keep the seed zone moist to lessen the possibility of damping off.
 5. Seedlings of Skunkbush sumac are not fertilized at the Los Lunas PMC. If fertility is a problem, fertilization should be guided by soil tests.
 6. The plants should be dug when dormant, after one or two growing seasons.

Prepared by J. F. - 3/79